

## The 6 Kinds of Karma-Personalities

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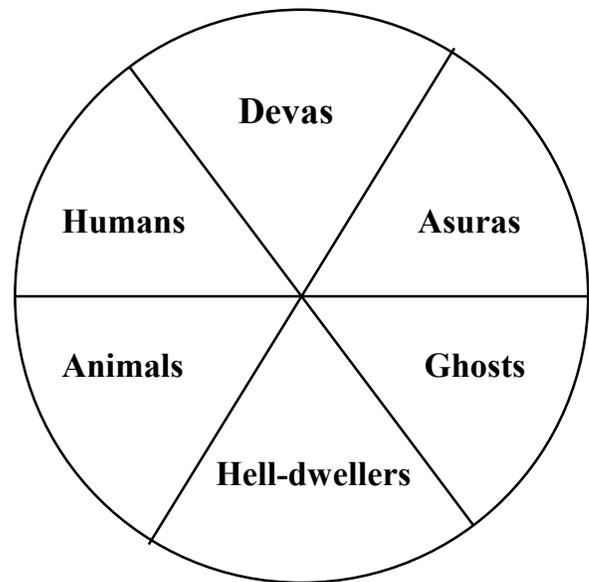
The Buddha and other eminent sages of India clairvoyantly perceived basically six kinds of situations for unenlightened beings. These are the *deva* (celestial) mode, the *asura* (demon) mode, the human mode, the animal mode, the *preta* (ghost) mode, and the *naraka* (hell) mode. The last three are called the “woeful” states, though ultimately all six are characterized by intrinsic unsatisfactoriness. To those of us not utilizing the psychic sensitivity to see into the subtler planes of existence, only the human and animal modes of existence are visible. But sages and psychics can readily perceive the other four modes of existence, which exist on subtle-energy planes of manifestation.

Each of these six modes or planes of existence (*lokas*) is characterized by a certain dominant type of *karma*, or egocentric pattern of doing and feeling:

**1) Devas:** The *deva*-type of being (*deva* = “shining one”) has created lots of positive *karma* in past lives, engaged in altruistic actions, noble thoughts, diligent focus in the arts or sciences, and various forms of spirituality, including meditation, visualizations, chanting, and so forth. While engaged in these positive behaviors, the *deva*-type of individual is, alas, still attached to the sense of being the ego, the “me,” the “doer,” seeking some kind of aggrandizement or reward. Yet because of such good actions in the past, which, like all *karmas*, are lawfully destined to manifest a consequence, the *deva* now inhabits one of the “heavenly” realms, surrounded by charismatic, lovely beings (fellow *devas*) and beautiful sights, sounds, and other refined sensations and thought-forms [e.g., interesting poetic, religious, mathematical or scientific ideas]. The entire scenario is akin to a heavenly banquet party. (Tales of many near-death experiences [NDEs] indicate that the person has visited one of these *deva* states of existence.) This heavenly state can *seem* like the final stage of spiritual realization, but it is not! The Buddha and other sages have clearly warned that one must go beyond the heavens, saying that this exalted *deva* state is not authentic spiritual liberation, but just another aspect, albeit a very pleasant one, of the cosmic dream of egoic limitation. These *devas* are not truly awake, they are not Buddhas (or the Christ Consciousness), they are merely playing out and experiencing the fruit of their past *karmas*. And while they exist in this heavenly state, they are more or less *attached* to the arising pleasures (the lovely people, sights, sounds, etc.). This is their plight. Eventually, after a long period of time (the *devas* live much longer life-spans than do humans on earth), the *devas* exhaust the fruits of their good *karmas*, and they fall back into one of the other five kinds of existence, usually but not always into a human existence. In short, the plight of the *deva* is attachment to the sense of being a do-gooder, and attachment to pleasure, beauty and refined experiential states. Someone with *deva*-*karma* must learn to let go attachments to pleasure and beauty (not necessarily avoid it, but inwardly stay free of binding attachment), and enquire deeply into the sense of being a separate “me” or “doer” until this limited, narrow ego-sense dissolves, and one wakes up into (or returns to) one’s original pure state as the God-Self—simple, unbounded Being-Awareness-Bliss.

**2) Asuras:** The *asuras* or demon-type beings have learned over lifetimes to focus their attention and will-power to increase their vitality, charisma, and control over other beings and forms of matter. They are extremely self-centered, their entire *modus operandi* can be summed up in the phrase, “looking out for number one: me!” They no longer listen to the conscience, and are quite willing to manipulate, deceive, or injure other beings in their course of seeking greater forms of pleasure, greed and power. Some of the more sadistic demon-souls even enjoy pestering other beings in the six planes of existence, just for the enjoyment of it. Demon-possession (such as depicted in the movie *The Exorcist*) is an extreme (and, fortunately, very rare) instance of a demon grossly interfering in the life of another being. *Asuras*

## Buddhas / Awake Beings



especially like to bother great spiritual adepts who are awakening from the subtler layers of the cosmic egocentric dream. (Such adepts as the Buddha, Jesus, Antony of Egypt, Teresa of Avila, Padre Pio, Milarepa of Tibet, and many others have had to encounter these demonic tribulations as part of their “test” of equanimity and fearlessness.) The paramount spiritual task for a demon-type individual is to let go the greed for power and pleasure, to *empathize* with other beings—that is, to experience life from outside their usual selfish, narcissistic viewpoint—and to lovingly serve as many beings as possible.

**3) Ghosts:** The ghostly condition of the *pretas* involves unfulfilled desire, a longing to complete a certain kind of experience left unfinished, usually in the *deva* realm or human realm. The “haunted house” phenomenon, a very real phenomenon, involves a troubled ghost-soul still attached to the earth plane of existence, caught up in a kind of repetitive dream of either doing something he used to habitually do or trying to accomplish something he did not satisfactorily accomplish. In psychological terminology, the ghost suffers from “an incomplete *gestalt*,” he has “unfinished business.” The task for a being with ghost-like *karma* is to let go the past, let go the future, “what should have been” or “what could be,” and experience the fullness of the present here-now, one’s radical aliveness as the God-Self in this magnificent moment.

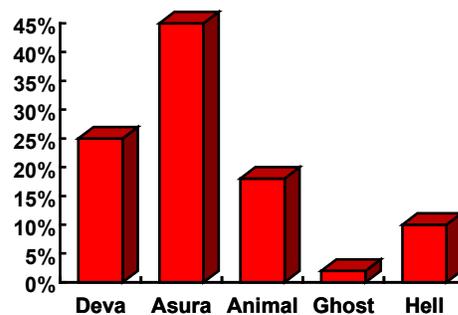
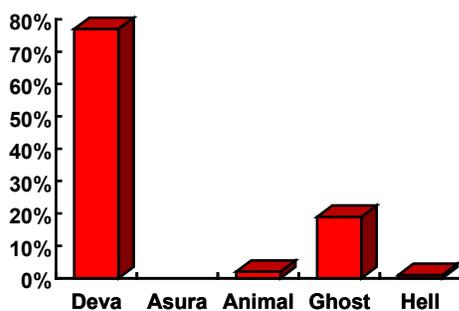
**4) Hell-dwellers:** The hell-realm is characterized by a tremendously negative sense of oppression and misery, mainly in the form of feeling “one down,” the victim of circumstances. There is a strong sense of being afflicted or deprived by some other being(s) or force (“God is doing this to me” or “he/she/it/they are making my life miserable” or even “my own mind is driving me crazy”). The hell realms are described in the classical spiritual literature in various ways, as hot, cold, dark, degraded, disgusting situations. The hell experience is usually karmically rooted in a sense of shame, failure, self-loathing. The task for anyone caught in a hellish condition is to take responsibility for one’s own attitude, to stop projecting blame outside oneself (even one’s own mind), and to try to realize that one’s intrinsic nature is spiritual bliss, not dependent on external situations or the passing emotional states of one’s own mind. It helps to realize that all forms of experience are part of a changing, ultimately-temporary cosmic dream, and that no situation is permanent, even the hell realms. The Buddha and other sages before and since him have all pointed out that no state of *karma* is permanent and unchanging; hence, no being is condemned to eternal suffering. (In Christian tradition, this is Alexander, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa’s beautiful idea of *apocatastasis*, or universal salvation: God’s Love, being infinite, perfect and almighty, eventually, in this life or another, accomplishes everyone’s salvation or *theosis*; no limited sentient being has the power to damn himself forever, to banish himself to an eternal hell of separate selfhood.)

**5) Animals:** The animal condition, ranging from primates to protozoa, involves the *karma* of inert, instinct-driven behavior. While some higher life forms (primates, elephants, cats, pigs, dogs, et al.) may enjoy certain kinds of pleasure, play and even altruistic actions, the plight of even these animals is that they are usually too caught up in eating and sleeping, without much opportunity for more creative expression. The minds of most (not all) animals are not so developed or clear, and they apparently have difficulty in disidentifying from the limited egoic sense of bodymind. The task for animals, if they can manage it, is to inwardly detach from circumstances and try to exert the power of discernment and freedom from binding patterns of repetitive behavior. There seems to be a plan by the Divine to slowly, gradually develop sentient beings up through ever higher, more refined animal embodiments until they can generate enough soul energy to be individuated as more self-conscious, aware, responsible participants in the cosmos. One can clearly see this already happening with certain higher animals who manifest a clear moral sense of right and wrong, higher-order levels of intelligence in their forms of play and problem-solving. Some animals even seem quite “saintly” in their willingness to sacrifice bodily comfort—even their very lives—for the sake of saving other sentient beings (not just members of their own family or species).

**6) Humans:** The human condition is, potentially, the least *karma*-driven of all the six kinds of embodiment. Nevertheless, a human being’s psychological make-up reflects the other five kinds of *karma*, and one of the previous five kinds of *karma* may be dominant in a human being’s temperament, especially if a human has just reincarnated from one of these *lokas* (planes of existence) in his/her previous life. Thus, a human with strong *deva karma* may possess a beautiful body, charisma, material wealth, and one or more talents (e.g., extraordinary ability in the field[s] of art, music, dance, speaking, mathematics, philosophy,

science, leadership/organization, *etc.*). A human with strong *deva karma* would be drawn to associate with other members of the “beautiful people” trendy set (and be attached to hanging out in posh environments frequented by the super-rich), and might be drawn to philanthropic and/or religious activity. Many of the teachers and participants in the New Age movement and leaders of mainline religions are people with strong *deva* tendencies. By contrast, humans with strong *asura/demon karma* can often be found in the arenas of institutional power (e.g., Wall Street, Washington, Hollywood, and wherever else the “elite” like to operate; these people also like to spend their time at the posh settings filled with *deva*-type people, especially if they have a strong *deva* element in their own temperament). A human being with strong “ghost” *karma* might be endlessly replaying his past, obsessively fixating on “the good ol’ days” or on some unrequited love affair or unfulfilled ambition. A person with strong “hell” *karma* might be inertly wallowing in physical, emotional or financial ruin, full of despair and hopelessness. A person with strong “animal” *karma* might be lodged in front of the television, junk food in hand, addicted to sensations as he/she channel surfs (or watches endless soaps, sports events, or low-energy talk shows).

Note that humans usually have a **mix of karma tendencies**; so their overall personality profile can reveal a dominant *karma*-pattern (or two almost equally dominant *karma*-patterns) along with strong secondary *karma*-patterns. A person’s *karma*-patterns can be graphed, in the manner of a bar-graph. A being with a karmic-personality profile as shown in the **graph on the left** might be a great artist, scientist, or teacher (e.g., a New Age teacher or Christian televangelist), who still has a bit of neurotic (ghost-like) hankering for greater acclaim. A person with a temperament as analyzed in the **graph on the right** might be a power-mongering politician or druglord who, despite being afflicted with a strong tendency toward callous exploitation of others, has a relatively strong *deva*-side to his personality, manifest in the fact that he often goes to church, gives to the poor, likes fine art, and has a winning smile and charming manners that lead people to initially like him and trust him.



The supreme endeavor for all sentient beings (whether characterized by *deva*, *asura*, human, animal, ghost or hell *karma*) is to *disidentify* from their “act,” their chronic egocentric involvement with particular binding likes, dislikes, and delusions. When one completely detaches from the melodrama of “me,” regardless of one’s circumstance, one wakes up from the personal ego-dream into the *transpersonal*, absolute Reality of God, Spirit, Pure Awareness. This awakening reveals one’s true nature as Buddha (“Awake One”) or Christ-Consciousness. Any actions that flow out of such an enlightened state are according to the Divine Will or Tao. They are motivated by the *urge to serve sentient beings* within the dream of manifestation. These actions do *not* involve *karma* (egocentric doing), and thus are *not binding*.

In this profoundly subtle, glorious awakening, which is obvious in the lives and deeds of the greatest spiritual masters, one is no longer trapped in any sense of separate “self”; rather, one floats free as the Source-principle of Divine Awareness. In such absolute freedom, one may compassionately manifest oneself in any of the six realms (*lokas*) to help liberate sentient beings from their confusion and pain. Thus, as shown in the diagram on page one, the Buddhas (Christs, Jivanmuktas, Avatars, “Free Beings”) are “beyond the wheel” of deluded, dream-like *karma*-involvements; yet they are free to associate with a body (that is, to consciously “incarnate”) in any of the six realms, to love, serve, and enlighten various beings. May we all fully awaken in/as this Divine Love-Peace-Freedom-Bliss. An old Buddhist prayer:

\* *May all beings be happy* \* *May all beings be peaceful* \* *May all beings be liberated* \*